

Haftarah Bo – Jeremiah 46:13-28

*an English version by Len Fellman which may be sung to the trope melodies
from Cantor Moshe Haschel in NAVIGATING THE BIBLE II:*

<http://bible.ort.org/books/haftarotd4.asp?action=displaypage&book=2&chapter=46&verse=13&portion=17>

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46:13 The word that was spoken by YHWH to Jeremiah the prophet
[to announce the coming] of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon [to strike against] the land of Egypt.

14 Declare in Egypt, and proclaim in Migdol; announce in Noph, and in Tahpanhes
[and say this]: “Stand forth [and make yourselves] ready,
for the sword has devoured [all that is around you].”

15 [Why is it] that your warriors were toppled?
[They did not] stand because YHWH [thrust them down].

16 [He made many] to stumble, [indeed fell] [each man] [on another].
[And they said]: “[Let us arise] | and return [to our people], and to the land of our birth,
from before the sword of the oppressor.”

17 [They cried out] there:
“Pharaoh king of Egypt [is but a noise], [who lets pass] [the appointed time].

18 As I live, [says the King]—YHWH (*Adonai*) *Tsevaot*, is His name—
Surely, like Tabor among the mountains [and like Carmel], by the sea, he will come.

19 Your bundle for exile—get it ready; [O daughter], [dwelling in Egypt].
For Noth will become a desert: a wasteland, uninhabited.

20 A heifer quite splendid is Egypt; but the gadfly from the north, is surely coming.

21 [Even the mercenaries] in her midst [are just like] [fatted calves].
[For even they also] [turned and went back]. They fled together; [they did not] stand;
for the day [of their disaster] has come upon them, the time of their reckoning.

46:22 A sound like the serpent's approaches,
[for with an army] they travel, and with axes they come against her, like those [who fell trees].
23 They cut down her forests, so says YHWH. For [they cannot be searched],
being more numerous than locusts, indeed they are [without number].
24 [Put to shame]—[the daughter of Egypt]; handed over to a people from the north.
25 [Thus there speaks] YHWH (*Adonai*) Tsevaot, the God of Israel: “Behold, I am attending to Amon of No,
to Pharaoh, to Egypt, to its gods [and to its kings]—[yea, to Pharaoh] and to all those who trust in him.
26 [And I will deliver them] into the hand [of those who seek] their lives, [into the hand]
of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and of his servants.
[But thereafter] you shall have rest as in days of old”, [thus says YHWH].
27 “[But as for you]: [have no fear], my servant Jacob, [don't be alarmed], O Israel.
[Because indeed], I will save you from afar, [and your offspring] from the land of their captivity.
[Then Jacob indeed] [will surely dwell] in quiet and at ease, and none make him afraid.
28 [And as for you]: [have no fear], my servant Jacob”, [thus says YHWH], for I [am with you].
[For indeed] I will make an end [of all the nations] | [unto which] [I have] [dispersed you]
but of you I will not [make an end]. [I will correct you] [in just measure],
[end melody] [but I *will* not] utterly destroy you.

Len Fellman's English readings with tropes

The purpose of this project is to translate *THE SONG OF THE TORAH* into English.

I work by comparing as many as ten English translations of a *pasuk* and creating a cantillated English sentence that sounds as much as possible like the Hebrew. They follow the Hebrew as closely as possible, word for word and trope by trope. The English language has an amazing flexibility, making it possible to make the English word order match that of the Hebrew quite well, allowing for some “poetic licence”, and some willingness on the part of the listener to be “carried” by the melody more than by the English syntax. The translation needs to sound good when *chanted*, but not necessarily when *spoken or read*.

Unlike most translations, these “transtropilations” are not intended to be a substitute for the Hebrew. On the contrary, they are meant to provide a “window” into the Hebrew text and its musical expression. My ideal listener knows enough Hebrew and has enough interest to follow the Hebrew in a bilingual text while the *leyner* is chanting the English version, to bring the Hebrew text to life, both *verbally* and *musically*. For this purpose I use *exactly* the same tropes in the English as in the Hebrew (almost always on the corresponding English word).

The texts can be used to do **consecutive translation**, i.e. leyning a phrase in Hebrew, followed by the corresponding phrase sung in English. Some of my recordings demonstrate this. I do this frequently when leyning for groups that either know little Hebrew, or that don't have a *chumash* in front of them.

I favor literal translations (e.g. “cut a covenant”) to call attention to Hebrew idioms, and towards simpler (even if less accurate) words (e.g. Ex. 12:7 “beam above the door” rather than “lintel”) to be easier to follow. If my readings provoke a discussion of the Hebrew, I consider that as justification for using less-than-idiomatic English. I try to find just the right balance between “literalness” and “listenable-ness”. A primary goal is throwing light on the Hebrew syntax.

In order to adapt the trope symbols to a left-to-right language like English, I *reversed* the direction of the trope symbols:

mercha tipcha munach tevir mapakh or yetiv kadma or pashta gersh gershayim telisha katana telisha gedola

(Generally speaking the *conjunctive tropes* such as mercha, munach, mapakh, kadma, and telisha katana “lean toward” the words they “conjoin” to, while the *disjunctive tropes* such as tipcha, gersh, gershayim, and telisha gedola “lean away” from the words that follow, so as to create a sense of separation.)

The trope symbol is normally placed under the accented syllable, unless it is a *pre-positive* accent (telisha gedola, placed *at the beginning* of the word or phrase) or a *post-positive* one (telisha katana or pashta, placed at the *end* of the word or phrase).

The Hebrew text frequently puts a *makkeph* (which is like a hyphen) between words in order to treat them as a single word to be chanted. I use a different system for English: If an entire English phrase is to be chanted to a single trope melody, I place it between grey brackets, as in this phrase from the Book of Lamentations:

[clings to her skirts]

The *leyner* is invited to fit this phrase to the *Eicha* “rivi'i” melody in whatever way seems most natural.

As a variant of the “grey bracket” device, I indicate pairs of tropes by “wrapping them around” the phrase which have the combined melody:

mercha/tipcha	kadma/geresh (or: azla, etc.)	mercha siluk
⌋Renew our days⌋	⌋She weeps bitterly⌋	⌋a fire-offering to God⌋

Again, the *leyner* should decide on the most natural way to fit the phrase to the combined trope melody.

I put words in gray which I consider essential but which don’t strictly match the Hebrew. I also “pad” some phrases with extra words in gray to fill out a musical phrase nicely. Different trope systems vary widely in the length of the musical phrase used, so the words in gray may or not be used depending on the *leyner*’s cantillation system. In particular, the tropes *telisha g’dola* (ר), *legarmeh*, *metigah-zakef*, and *pazer* vary widely in the musical phrases used for chanting. (And please indulge me in my whimsical treatments of *shalsholet*.)

“*Metigah-zakef*” is a special trope combination which can be recognized by a kadma and a zakef katon appearing on the same Hebrew word (again, a *makkeph* makes two words into one). (There are several examples in Genesis 18 & 19, beginning with 18:16). I indicate this by placing the corresponding English phrase in grey brackets:

[Take heed—take care for yourself]

In some trope systems (viz. cantor Moshe Haschel in “Navigating the Bible II”) this is given a distinctive melody—I add extra syllables to fill out the musical phrase (as in “take care” in this example). Haschel’s system also chants the trope *munach* as *legarmeh* more often than other systems do.

I don’t write a single word of translation without first hearing the melody of the phrase in my mind, following one of two trope systems: The one by Portnoy and Wolff (*The Art of Cantillation*) or the one by Joshua R. Jacobson (*Chanting the Hebrew Bible*).

I transcribe the name יהוה as YHWH (in small caps). I almost always chant this as *yud-hey-vav-hey*, which I have discovered fits marvelously into several of the trope melodies. But of course the *leyner* can choose to pronounce it as “God” or “Adonai”.

Warning on the Hebrew text: The text I use for the English trope system is from Aryeh Kaplan; the Hebrew text I display is from Wikisource. Occasionally (but rarely) a phrase will use different tropes in the two systems.

The English translations I mostly use (besides several scholarly commentaries) are the following:

Aryeh Kaplan, ‘The Living Torah’ (1981) (also my source for proper names & transliterations)
Richard Elliott Friedman, ‘The Bible With Sources Revealed’ (2003)
Everett Fox, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (1997)
The Stone Edition ‘Tanach’ (1996)
JPS ‘Hebrew-English Tanach’, (2nd Ed. 2000), *along with* Orlinsky, ‘Notes on the New Translation of the Torah’ (1969)
Robert Alter, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (2004)
Commentaries in the ‘Anchor Bible’ series
Rotherham, The Emphasized Bible (1902)
The Jerusalem Bible (1966) (also my source for topic headings)
The New King James Bible (1982)